

Would you think, Charlotte, that it were possible to hatch chickens in ovens? You remember, Billy, I shewed you a little book, in which it is asserted, that hatching eggs in an oven is a common practice, not only in Egypt; but in Italy also. As soon as the chickens come out of the shell, they are put under the care of a fowl; and this fowl, having been trained to the business, leads them about, and performs all the offices of a mother, as if she had hatched them herself.

This is, to be sure, a wonderful thing; but though it has been tried in England, I do not find it has met with much success. Indeed, my dear children, it is a very unnatural way of proceeding, and I do not like it, the more especially as I do not see any necessity for it.

Another odd custom, which I consider as still more idle and ridiculous, is that of putting ducks-eggs under a hen. The ducks are no sooner hatched, than the

first water they come to, in they bounce, and the poor hen, in the utmost distress, clucks and clucks in vain to call them out; for, having hatched them herself, she supposes them to be of the same nature with her chickens, who are not fond of water. This is surely a piece of wanton cruelty.

I think I have heard you both say, that you like to eat part of a fowl, but that you do not like to see them killed. I commend you for your tenderness and compassion; for though Providence has graciously given us these animals, yet, if we were not occasionally to kill them, we should be starved, and the fowls would become so numerous, that they would certainly starve one another. So that, though fowls must be killed by somebody, yet surely no one can take any pleasure in seeing a poor creature in the agonies of death. For this reason beast killing is become a trade, called Butchers,

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